

Purpose of and Need for Action

1.1 Purpose

The Milan Beltway Extension will provide a connection between the developing area south of the Rock River and the urbanized area north of the river. The northern termini is the John Deere Expressway. The southern termini is the connection to the existing Milan Beltway which presently terminates at Airport Road. Reconstruction of the northern portion of the existing Beltway (the proposed project) is necessary to accommodate the Airport Road interchange and the transition section between the existing and proposed Beltway. Figure 1-1 shows the location of the project area in relation to the Quad City Metropolitan Area. Figure 1-2 is a project location map at an increased scale showing key project elements.

The project is carefully integrated with the John Deere Expressway. This expressway corridor is rapidly developing as the retail center of the Illinois Quad Cities. Large retail uses have developed and are continuing to develop in this corridor from Rock Island to East Moline. Construction is complete on a hospital complex just east of the Beltway that replaces two hospitals in Moline. The proposed project will become the primary transportation link for providing service between the south side of the Rock River and the commercial and service area north of the river.

Area residents have been concerned about the eventual widening of Blackhawk Road through the Black Hawk State Historic Site. This concern was expressed during the proposed reconstruction of Blackhawk Road between the east edge of the historic site (24th Street, Rock Island) and 7th Street in Moline. Widening Blackhawk Road to a four-lane cross-section through the historic site would cause adverse ecological impacts to this public recreational facility. In response to this concern, the Illinois Department of Transportation committed to negotiate with the local agencies and assume the lead agency role to complete all engineering and environmental studies needed for the Milan Beltway Extension that would relieve traffic through Blackhawk State Historic Site to the extent that four-lane warrants would not be met.





The proposed interconnection with Airport Road is also a critical element of this project. The project will relieve traffic volumes on Airport Road which is currently experiencing capacity problems.

The project includes a new 4-lane bridge over the Rock River. The bridge, a critical element in future movements, is expected to carry 49,300 vehicles per day in 2020.

1.2 History

The concept of a Rock River crossing in the vicinity of the proposed project first appeared in 1970. In that year the "Davenport-Rock Island-Moline Urbanized Area Transportation Study" recommended a West Rock River Bridge connecting the Milan Beltway with 38th Street in Rock Island. The next metropolitan area transportation plan ("1995 Transportation Plan Report", December 1975) recommended the same crossing location for the Milan Beltway as is currently proposed. However, the roadway was to terminate at Blackhawk Road near the Rock Island/Moline border rather than connect to 38th Street.

As planning matured for the John Deere Expressway improvements in the early 1980s, the proposed river crossing was incorporated into the concept as a connector between the proposed expressway and the existing Milan Beltway.

The Milan Beltway, as presently proposed, appeared in "Quad City Streets: Year 2005." This report was published in 1986. The March 1996 metropolitan area transportation plan, "Quad City Long-Range Transportation Plan", include the proposed project. The latest metropolitan area transportation plan, "2025 Quad City Area Long Range Transportation Plan" (March 2001) confirms the proposed project as the last link in completion of the Milan Beltway. The 2001 transportation plan includes the addition of two lanes from Route 67/1st Street in Milan east and north to the proposed project to match the roadway proposed for the Milan Beltway Extension. Figure 1-3 shows the Quad Cities 2001-2025 roadwork network projects on the Long Range Transportation Plan.

The funding of this Environmental Impact Study and the Design and Location Study for this project is provided by the state of Illinois, county of Rock Island, city of Moline, city of Rock Island, and the village of Milan

1.3 Need

1.3.1 System Linkage

The Milan Beltway Extension is the planned connecting link between the Milan Beltway on the south side of Rock River and the John Deere Expressway on the north side of the river (see Figure 1-2). The proposed extension would divert a substantial volume of traffic away from Blackhawk Road and Black Hawk State Historic Site. The project would also provide improved access to the interstate highway system (I-280) for residents of southeast Rock Island and southwest Moline (north of Rock River) by turning west from the Milan Beltway Extension on Airport Road to the Airport Road/I-280 Interchange.

As previously indicated, a Rock River crossing, in the vicinity of the project, has been in the metropolitan area's transportation plan for three decades. The nearest crossing to the

proposed project is U.S. 67 to the west approximately 2.9 kilometers (1.8 miles) and 27th Street 3 kilometers (1.9 miles) to the east.



1.3.2 Traffic Volumes

Completion of the beltway would relieve existing and anticipated traffic pressure on several heavily-traveled roadways in the vicinity of the project. Of primary importance are traffic volumes on Blackhawk Road west of the project.

Black Hawk State Historic Site is a heavily-wooded park, historic site, and recreation area; popular with both local residents and tourists. Blackhawk Road, through the site, is a relatively narrow, 2-lane roadway with woodland and steep embankments immediately adjacent to the right-of-way.

A review of the forecasted traffic that will remain on Blackhawk Road through Black Hawk State Historic Site located 2.4 kilometers (1.5 miles) west of the proposed Milan Beltway Extension indicated that the year 2020 forecasted traffic is 16,400 vehicles per day. When the expected peak design hour portion of this traffic was applied with the traffic generated by the State Historic Site Lodge in a computer model of the intersection of IL 5 with the lodge driveway, it was shown that this intersection would still operate at an acceptable level of service in the A to B range, indicating a good level of service through the year 2020.

Based on this high forecasted Level of Service, neither reconstruction of this intersection nor the need to build additional lanes in Blackhawk Road would be warranted. The expected traffic on Blackhawk Road through the Historic Site in the year 2020 is forecasted to be about the same as currently on this road in the year 2000, thanks to the diversion of traffic onto the Milan Beltway. Therefore, since Blackhawk Road through the Historic Site Park has never been ranked as a high accident location and since traffic will not increase over the next twenty years, construction of Blackhawk Road to add additional through lanes through Blackhawk State Historic Site will not be a requirement in the standard twenty year planning range for urban transportation planning. In addition, future traffic traveling west on Blackhawk Road from the proposed Milan Beltway Extension will exit the road at the Rock Valley Plaza, present and future commercial uses along Blackhawk Road, 38th Street, 30th Street, and 24th Street/17th Street, resulting in only a minor increase in traffic by 2020.

The proposed Milan Beltway Extension will not increase traffic through Blackhawk State Historic Site and will not adversely impact this historic and recreational facility. The proposed Milan Beltway Extension does not require the use of a Section 4(f) property and will not require the completion of a Section 4(f) Evaluation.

Base-year (1998) traffic counts and projected traffic volumes for the proposed project and affected adjacent roadways are shown on Figure 1-4.

1.3.3 Capacity

Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure describing operational conditions within a traffic stream. LOS ratings for a mainline facility are described as follows:

- LOS A - Describes free-flow conditions. Operation of vehicles virtually unaffected by the presence of other traffic.

- LOS B - Free-flow conditions, although presence of other vehicles begins to be noticeable.
- LOS C - Influences of traffic density become marked.
- LOS D - Borders on unstable traffic flow. Ability to maneuver is severely restricted.
- LOS E - Operation at capacity.
- LOS F - Flow breakdown. Demands exceed capacity.

It is predicted that by the year 2025, the following existing roadway segments associated with the proposed project will be at or below Level of Service "D".

Projected Average Daily Traffic Volumes
Figure 1-4



- Blackhawk Road (through Historic Site).
- The intersection of 7th Street and the John Deere Expressway (east of the proposed beltway extension).
- Existing Milan Beltway (south of Airport Road).
- Airport Road (east of the proposed beltway).

Since Blackhawk Road through the Historic Site will be at or below level of Service "D" by the year 2025, it will meet criteria and standards for reconstruction to four lanes. This is a highly undesirable impact and would violate public commitments made by the IDOT that no additional right-of-way will be taken from the Historic Site.

If a Build Alternate is implemented, all roadway segments listed above will have a Level of Service "C" or better.

1.3.4 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program

The latest Quad-City transportation improvement program prepared by the Bi-State Regional Commission shows the following concerning the proposed Milan Beltway Extension project:

- Fiscal Year 2003 - Construction Engineering - \$2,000,000
- Fiscal Year 2003 - Utility Adjustment - \$10,000
- Fiscal Year 2003 - New Bridges - \$16,200,000
- Fiscal Year 2004 - Grading, Paving, and New Bridge - 52nd Avenue - \$10,900,000
- Fiscal Year 2004 - Utility Adjustment - 52nd Avenue - \$175,000
- Fiscal Year 2004 - Construction Engineering - 52nd Avenue - \$1,100,000
- Fiscal Year 2004 - Add to Lanes & Signals to 2-Lane Beltway Segments - \$3,600,000